

having an index  $n_2$  lower than  $n_1$ , and a second cylindrical cladding of circular section surrounding the first cladding and having an index  $n_3$ .

8. (Amended) A method according to claim 5, characterized in that the central optical preform and the rods having an index  $n_3$  are placed in a sleeve (5, 16) within which the atmosphere is controlled for drawing by establishing a vacuum or a partial pressure of neutral gases such as helium or reagents such as  $C_2F_6$ .

10. (Amended) A method according to claim 5, characterized in that the interstices between the rods (15) having an index  $n_3$  are filled and the atmosphere in the volume delimited by the rods is controlled for drawing by establishing a vacuum or a partial pressure of neutral gases such as helium or reagents such as  $C_2F_6$ .

11. (Amended) A method according to claim 5, characterized in that the second cladding is enveloped in a low-index polymer coating (20).